

Chapter Six

Management Guidelines & Development Recommendations

CHAPTER SIX

Landscape Management Guidelines and Park Development Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter includes guidelines for landscape management that are intended to balance the preservation of natural, cultural, and horticultural resources of the White property with Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) goals and objectives for future use and development of the park. It also includes an impact assessment of parking and circulation alternatives and offers specific recommendations regarding use and development of park facilities that are to be considered when finalizing the Concept Development Plan (CDP).

Preferred Development Alternative

On July 21, 2005, FCPA coordinated a Public Workshop to gain feedback on the three development concepts and the five entrance options outlined in Chapter Five. Following a short presentation of the alternatives, attendees were assigned to small groups for facilitated discussion of the pros and cons for each. As a result of these public comments, FCPA prepared a draft CDP, see Figure 6-1. Key components of this plan generally adhere to the operational and site development recommendations outlined in Concept One, with some additional components of Concept Two.

- Although a final operations plan will be devised when the park opens, for long-range planning purposes, operations are envisioned as follows:
 - The park will be open to the public on a daily basis, from 9:00 a.m. to dusk.
 - The user experience will be short-term, self-directed, and casual.
 - Limited visitor support facilities will be provided (i.e. water fountain, restrooms), and no staff, other than an on-site caretaker, will be available.

- The on-site/resident caretaker will have limited responsibility for management of the property.
- Site management/maintenance will be supported by volunteers.
- During peak bloom season, limited and scheduled, self-guided garden tours will be provided.
- When special programs occur, they will be limited to groups of 20 individuals at a time.
- The projected number of average daily users is up to 30 per day, and the site will need to accommodate 25 parking spaces.
- Facilities:
 - House will serve as a caretaker's residence with part of the first floor (living room, restrooms, sunroom and greenhouse) used to support garden/horticultural programs.
 - An interpretive kiosk, appropriately sited to capture but not intrude upon important views from the house, will become a point of orientation for visitors.
 - Existing trails will be expanded as needed to accommodate public use and be connected with new trails to create a woodland perimeter trail.
 - Demonstration gardens will be added in keeping with the existing woodland garden/open meadow and other garden themes, such as wildflowers, ferns, meadow plants, and/or native species trees, shrubs, and plants.
 - Open lawn area will be preserved as open space.
- Benches will be placed near trails and along the edge of the lawn and forest for resting and contemplation.
- Small interpretive signs will be installed along the trails and pathways.
- Barn structure will be stabilized and preserved, but public use/access will not be provided.
- Invasive plant species will be removed and managed to prevent further infestation.
- Perimeter fencing will be added as needed. Gates will be added at key points for controlled access to the property.
- Small maintenance/equipment storage building will be constructed in the parking area behind the barn.
- Vegetative screening will be added along the southern border (near the Kennedy property and properties at the end of Wraywood Place).



White Horticultural Park

Conceptual Development Plan DRAFT

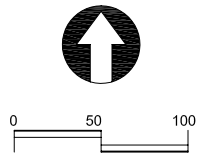
Legend

- Trees
- Woodland
- Shrub beds
- Shrubs
- Proposed buildings
- Existing trail
- Proposed trail
- Interpretive station
- Seating area

Figure 6-1.

(Source: Prepared by FCPA)

December, 2005



Parking and Circulation Alternatives Impact Assessment

Five alternative vehicular and pedestrian access points have been identified and presented in Chapter Five and at public workshops during the planning process, see Figure 6-2. Unless waived, County development regulations require the entry drive to be, at a minimum, an 18-foot-wide paved roadway. Emergency vehicle access will be necessary within 100 feet of the structures, with a maximum 6% slope of the roadway. An ADA compliant walkway will also be required between the parking area and key site features.

Each entry and associated parking area carries with it potential impacts to horticultural and natural resources within the White property. These options and their associated potential impacts to on-site resources are as follows:

Alternative One

Kerns Road Access: Access from Kerns Road would result in the greatest impact to natural resources, as it would require the greatest amount of woodland removal. The field inventory identified the North Woodlands as having the highest quality woodland vegetation, both in terms of its condition and habitat potential (largest intact patch with diversity of species and vertical stratification and only a minor presence of invasive exotics). This woodland also provides a buffer between the traffic on Kerns Road and nearby residential development and the Upper Garden, which is considered to be the centerpiece of the horticultural park. The character of the Upper Garden is most attractive in the northern quadrant of the property, as it has the highest quality plantings and landscape features in the park.

The wooded area between the Upper Garden and Kerns Road provides much of the needed shade for this garden. A loss of trees, and therefore shade, would be potentially damaging to the shade gardens present in this area. Grading and installations of walkway and emergency vehicle connections between the parking area and visitor orientation zone may require crossing parts of the Upper Garden that would produce significant impacts to the plant, shrub and tree root zones, the established landscape design and visual aesthetics. A parking area in this vicinity will also add noise and detract from the quiet and contemplative nature of the nearby garden.

Alternative Two

Goldsboro Access: Access from Goldsboro Court would result in low impacts to the site's horticultural resources. Natural resources would also receive little to no detrimental impact, as the western woodland thins out in this area of the park. However, parking in this location could significantly impact the open views from the house overlooking the meadow, which are key character-defining features of the park. Substantial screening would be necessary to mitigate this intrusion. If this alternative is chosen, extending the forest edge further out into the meadow should be considered in order to interplant this area with evergreen shrubs and make planting buffers appear to better blend in with the character of the landscape. While emergency vehicle access between the parking area and the structures on the site can be accommodated by a grasscrete connection or similar pervious pavement material, it may impact the visual cohesiveness of the meadow if this area is planted in tall grasses or

wildflowers. Parking in this area would also require the longest ADA compliant path between the parking area and the visitor orientation area.

Alternative Three

Existing Driveway Access from Princess Anne Lane: If the existing entry drive were improved to provide vehicle or emergency access into the site, it would require regrading and widening of the existing 12-foot driveway to a minimum of 18 feet, with grass shoulders on either side. Widening of this road would result in moderate impacts to the existing natural and horticultural resources located along it, as several of the mature trees—many measuring over 25 inches in diameter—would require removal. Several shrub beds along either side of the existing entry drive containing mature azaleas and rhododendrons would also be impacted. Slopes over 15% located at the western end of the entry drive would also require regrading and result in the removal of the existing stone retaining wall and many of the large trees located in this vicinity.

Although not specified in the draft CDP, an adequate emergency vehicle turnaround area may be required and could be accommodated on-site in the existing driveway loop near the residence with minor improvements. This improvement would require regrading the area south of the drive to accommodate the enlarged turning radius, and resurfacing it with a firm and stable surface such as gravel or grasscrete. A few horticultural resources south of the drive would be impacted by this modification, including a small shrub bed containing mostly boxwoods, a few rhododendrons, two small American holly trees, and two southern magnolias. A large post oak and black walnut tree, as well as several boxwood shrubs located in the center of the existing drive may also be impacted by these improvements.

Locating the visitor parking area in the vicinity of the barn would result in little impact to the natural and horticultural resources on the site. There are no significant shrubs located here, and the two garden beds found in this area are infested with invasive species (bush honeysuckle, English ivy, and privet). Most of the trees located to the east and south of the barn are fruit and nut trees (i.e., black walnut, pecan, Chinese chestnut) and reflect the historic utilitarian nature of this area. If parking were located in this area, it is recommended that it be placed further to the south in order to maintain a small maintenance area south of the barn, and also buffer this historic structure from the visual and physical impacts of the parking lot. Locating the parking lot further to the south of the barn would also mitigate impacts to potential archeological resources surrounding this historic structure. As the existing slope of the land between the proposed parking area and the visitor orientation zone averages 1:12, the accessible trail will need to deviate from the road edge to achieve a lesser slope and meet ADAAG specifications. A planted buffer zone should be located north of the lot to mitigate views from the visitor orientation zone.

Alternative Four

Rolfs Road Access: An entrance at Rolfs Road would result in moderate impact to natural resources. While the West Woodland is smaller in size than the North Woodland, there are many large trees located in the vicinity of the proposed access road that would require removal. It would also impact a few shrub beds located in the Lower Garden. One of these shrub beds contains several azaleas and rhododendrons, while the other contains only grapevine, vinca, and bush honeysuckle. The character of this area of the Lower Garden is

not as cohesive or well-defined as the Upper Garden because of the visual intrusions attributed to nearby residential development.

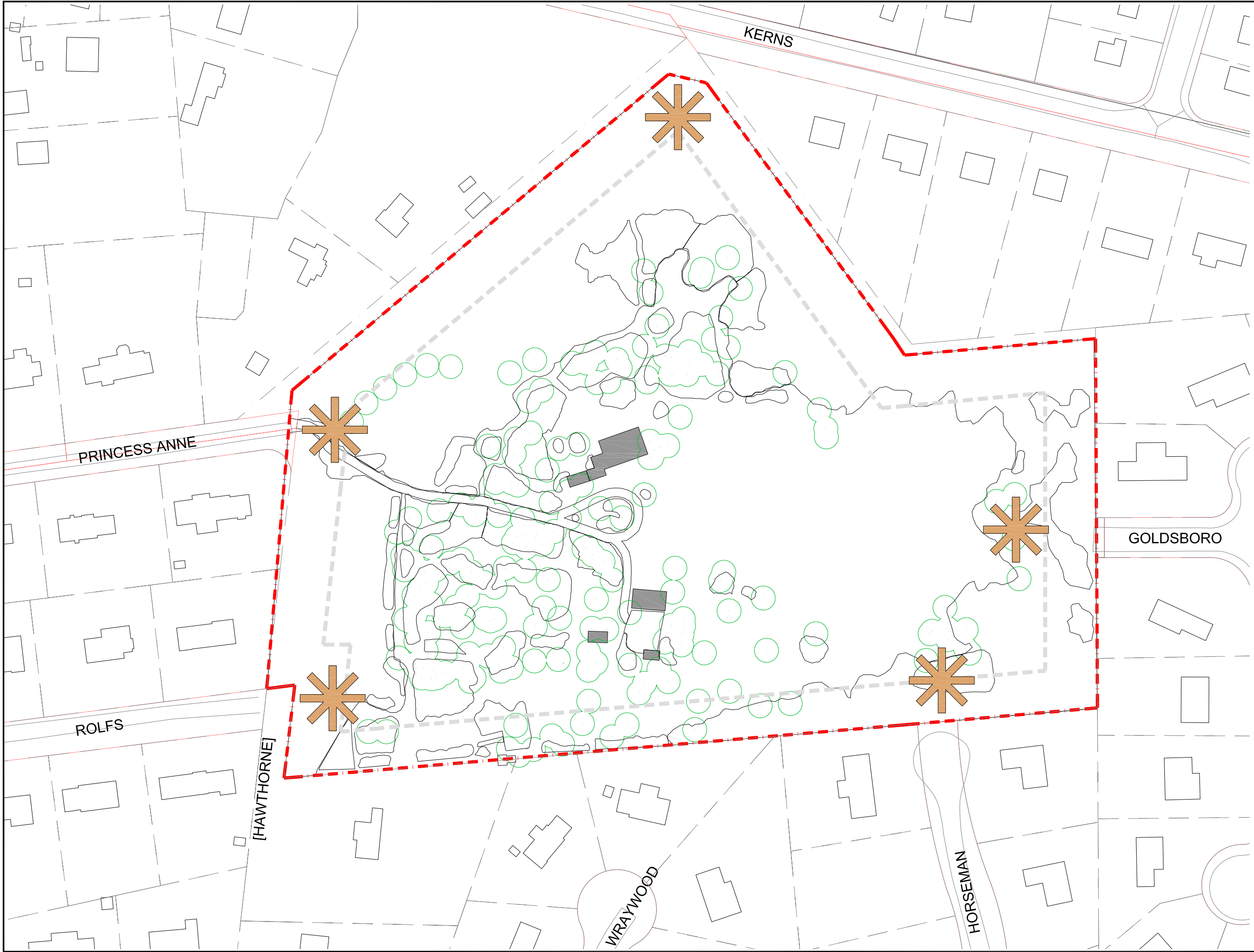
Locating the visitor parking area within the Lower Garden would result in significant impacts to the park's horticultural resources. Assuming that the parking area would occupy the land already disturbed by the demolished house, direct impacts would include required removal of a small shrub bed containing several rose bushes, spicebush, and hazelnut shrubs, as well as removal of shrubby vegetation surrounding the former house. This includes several spicebush, taxus, euonymus, and honeysuckle shrubs, as well as a few azaleas in poor condition. There are several large trees in good condition that would likely require removal, including a Norway maple, black walnut, and two pecans. While these horticultural resources are not necessarily high in ornamental value, locating parking here would add an intrusive element to the Lower Garden and alter the overall character of this space. Removal of the tree canopy on the eastern edge would also open up this space and diminish the feeling of an "outdoor room." A loss of trees within the Lower Garden would also cause a loss of shade and be potentially damaging to the shade gardens present in this area.

Alternative Five

Horseman Drive Access: If access were provided from Horseman Drive, it would result in significant impacts to the spring-fed pond located in the southeast corner of the park, and likely necessitate its removal. This pond provides local wildlife a source of water and serves an ecological function. Access here would also require removal of several trees located along the property line and reduce buffering to adjacent residents.

Recommended Alternatives

Based upon the likely impacts to the horticultural, ecological, and overall landscape aesthetic, Alternatives Two and Three are recommended for further consideration as they will result in the least amount of damage to site resources. Alternative Three, improvement of the existing driveway, is only recommended if the parking area can be situated further to the south and east of the barn to better buffer this historic structure and be screened from view of the house with additional plantings. Likewise, Alternative Two is only recommended if the parking area can be adequately screened from view of the house without detracting from the existing character of the site. Alternatives One, Four, and Five result in significant impacts to the site's horticultural and natural resources and therefore are not recommended for implementation.



**White
Horticultural
Park**

**Alternative
Entrance
Option
Locations**

NOTES

Multiple entrance options are shown for comparison ONLY.

Legend

- Trees
- Woodland
- Shrub beds
- Shrubs
- Entrance option

Figure 6-2.
(Source: Prepared by FCPA)

December, 2005

